

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 5858

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AF
SUBJ: INTERIOR MINISTRY SHAKE-UP INDICATES ANTI-PARCHAM
PURGE REACHING LOWER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT

REF: KABUL 5644

1. SUMMARY. EXTENSIVE PERSONNEL SHIFTS AT THE
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR INDICATE THAT THE ANTI-PARCHAM
PURGE, WHICH RECENTLY RESULTED IN THE ASSIGNMENT OF
THE TOP PARCHAM LEADERS TO VARIOUS AMBASSADORIAL
POSTS, CONTINUES TO UNFOLD. HOW FAR DOWN INTO THE
BUREAUCRACY THE PURGE WILL REACH REMAINS TO BE SEEN,
BUT THERE STILL ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THIS POLITI-
CAL HOUSECLEANING IS ENCOUNTERING RESISTANCE FROM
ANY QUARTER. END OF SUMMARY.

2. RADIO AFGHANISTAN ANNOUNCED THE EVENING OF JULY 16
EXTENSIVE NEW PERSONNEL ASSIGNMENTS AT THE MINISTRY OF
INTERIOR. INCLUDED IN THE APPOINTMENTS WERE A NEW
DEPUTY/MINISTER, MOHAMMAD SALEM MASOODI (THE GOVERNOR
OF KABUL PROVINCE SINCE THE REVOLUTION), AND NEW
GOVERNORS FOR THIRTEEN OF THE COUNTRY'S 27 PRO-
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VINCES. OTHER LESSER APPOINTMENTS WERE MADE; WE
WILL SEND THE COMPLETE LIST TO THE DEPARTMENT VIA
AIRGRAM.

3. COMMENT: THE NEW DEPUTY MINISTER IS A KNOWN
MEMBER OF THE KHALQIST WING (FORMERLY LED BY
PRIME MINISTER NOOR MOHAMMAD TARAKI) OF THE PEOPLE'S

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA), AND HE REPLACES A KNOWN PARCHAMIST, FAZL RABI PAZHWAK. LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT THE BACKGROUNDS OF MANY OF THE NEW GOVERNORS, BUT THE INFORMATION WHICH IS AVAILABLE ON SOME OF THEM INDICATES THAT, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RECENT PURGE WHICH EXILED PARCHAM LEADERS TO AMBASSADORIAL POSTS, LOWER RANKING PARCHAMISTS AT INTERIOR HAVE BEEN REPLACED BY KHALQISTS. HOW FAR THE REGIME WILL GO IN ITS POLITICAL HOUSECLEANING WITHIN THE REST OF THE BUREAUCRACY IS UNKNOWN. AT SOME POINT, HOWEVER, THE KHALQIST PERSONNEL RESERVOIR SHOULD RUN DRY, SINCE WE BELIEVE THAT THE LEADERSHIP'S PUBLIC CLAIMS OF PDPA MEMBERSHIP (TARAKI ONCE SAID THE PARTY HAD 50,000 MEMBERS AND "SYMPATHIZERS") ARE GROSSLY INFLATED.

4. INTERIOR, OF COURSE, IS A KEY MINISTRY FOR AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME, AND WITH THESE EXTENSIVE CHANGES, IT NOW HAS A COMPLETELY NEW LEADERSHIP FROM THAT WHICH WAS APPOINTED FOLLOWING THE APRIL REVOLUTION. TARAKI AND HIS COLLEAGUES PROBABLY NOW FEEL MORE CONFIDENT OF THE MINISTRY'S LOYALTY. IN THIS REGARD, IT HAD BEEN RUMORED THAT INTERIOR WAS A PARCHAMIST STRONGHOLD, AS WELL AS A HOTBED OF PARCHAMIST INTRIGUE AGAINST ITS KHALQIST RIVALS. INTERIOR MINISTER ASLAM WATANJAR, A KHALQIST -- AND THE MAJOR

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WHO LED THE COUP'S TANK FORCES, RECENTLY REPLACED NOOR AHMAD NOOR, A PARCHAMIST WHO IS NOW AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. THERE STILL HAVE BEEN NO INDICATIONS OF ANY VIOLENT RESISTANCE TO THIS PURGE, AND AT THIS POINT IT IS APPARENT THAT THE PARCHAMISTS HAVE, AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT, ACCEPTED THEIR FATE, RATHER THAN ATTEMPT TO PRECIPITATE A POSSIBLY VIOLENT CONFRONTATION WHICH THEY WOULD HAVE PROBABLY LOST AND WHICH COULD HAVE THREATENED THE ENTIRE REVOLUTION.

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